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RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 6177  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 7237  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 1634  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 001075

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FRANCE OFFERS CIVIL NUCLEAR COOPERATION TO PAKISTAN

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Pakistani newspapers reported on May 16 that French President Nicolas Sarkozy had offered a civilian nuclear deal to Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari during their meetings in Paris on May 15. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi quoted President Sarkozy as saying "What can be done for India can be done for Pakistan."

Subsequent statements by French officials seemed to downplay the agreement, indicating that it would involve cooperation on nuclear safety, not transfers of nuclear technology. However, French Ambassador to Pakistan Daniel Jouanneau confirmed to DCM that the intention is indeed to arrive at civil nuclear cooperation through a process similar to that with India. Jouanneau stated that France's National Security Advisor Jean-David Levitte would soon call NSA Gen. Jones to explain the French position. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Pakistani dailies reported on May 16 that France had offered Pakistan a civil nuclear cooperation arrangement modeled on the U.S.-India civil nuclear initiative. The newspapers alleged that French President Nicolas Sarkozy made the commitment to Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari during May 15 discussions in Paris. The papers reported that negotiations on an MOU on economic cooperation that will include energy and, specifically, nuclear cooperation, will commence in July with the aim of signing the agreement when President Sarkozy visits Pakistan later in the year. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi stated, "France has agreed to transfer civilian nuclear technology to Pakistan.... They have agreed that Pakistan should be treated like India.... President Sarkozy said, and I quote him 'What can be done for India can be done for Pakistan as well.'" A spokesman for the French presidency seemed to downplay the announcement, however, saying Mr. Sarkozy had merely "confirmed France was ready, within the framework of its international agreements, to cooperate with Pakistan in the field of nuclear safety. This is so the Pakistani programme can develop in the best conditions of safety and security," he said, according to Agence France-Presse.

¶3. (SBU) Subsequent editorials cast some doubt on the deal and noted the conspicuous lack of public confirmation from Paris. The News on Sunday editorialized that a nuclear deal, if confirmed, is an "attractive prospect," but "the transfer of nuclear technologies is a distant dream" and "there are

other power-generating sources that we could develop before we went down the nuclear road..." The Dawn newspaper welcomed the initiative by noting the history of French-Pakistani nuclear cooperation, cautioned that France would need the approval of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to proceed, and questioned whether Pakistan would be ready to accept the same terms as India - namely the monitoring of civilian reactors by the International Atomic Energy Agency, a nuclear test moratorium, and safeguards to ensure the security of nuclear arms.

14. (C) On May 17, however, French Ambassador Daniel Jouanneau pulled DCM aside after a local G-8 meeting to explain further the nuclear discussions in Paris. He said that the agreement came in a private meeting between Zardari and Sarkozy. Zardari asked for cooperation on wind power - "yes;" solar power - "yes;" nuclear power - "yes." Jouanneau said "after all, nuclear power is not too 'taboo' for us." He explained, however, that the French told the Pakistanis that they would need to make "gestures" to the international community on non-proliferation and also that France would abide by all of its international commitments. He also said that France envisions starting with cooperation on nuclear safety and security, following a similar process with the Indians that required ten years before they reached civil nuclear cooperation. He anticipates a similar timeline with the Pakistanis. Jouanneau stated that French National Security Advisor Jean-David Levitte would call U.S. National Security Advisor Gen. Jones to explain the French position. Jouanneau stated that it will be important to frame the

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agreement properly or the Indians will "sabotage" it.

15. (C) Comment: The sensitivity of the nuclear issue in Pakistan right now is enormously high. The latest Fox news story reporting on U.S. plans to seize Pakistani nuclear assets confirms Pakistan's deepest fears in this regard. Prime Minister Gilani on Sunday again offered assurances about Pakistan's nuclear security, citing an orchestrated campaign "launched by Pakistan's detractors expressing doubts about the security of nuclear assets...in an attempt to discredit the country's nuclear capability." The juxtaposition of this story with the idea that France is offering civil nuclear capacity on a par with India, however distant, could exacerbate the situation further. Jouanneau's comments and the French plans to brief the National Security Advisor are indications that French officials understand well that they are stepping into a hornet's nest if they proceed with this agreement. End comment.  
PATTERSON